

# **COVID-19 Resources for Workers and Emplo**

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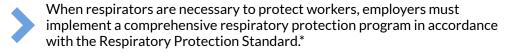
# Workplace Safety Guidelines

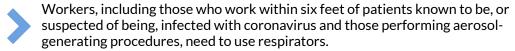
#### **OSHA Guidelines**

OSHA requirements apply to preventing occupational exposure to coronavirus. Among the most relevant are:



OSHA's Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) standards, which require using gloves, eye and face protection, and respiratory protection when job hazards warrant it.





For more information on OSHA's **Respiratory Protection Standards** visit: www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.134

Information on Personal Protective Equipment Standards related to COVID-19 can be found here: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/respirator-use-faq.html



The General Duty Clause of the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act of 1970, requires employers to furnish to each worker "employment and a place of employment, which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm."

For more OSHA guidance on the coronavirus pandemic visit: www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/ For information on OSHA's enforcement guidance for recording cases of coronavirus disease visit: www.osha.gov/memos/2020-05-19/revised-enforcement-guidance-recording-casescoronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19

#### **Local OSHA Office**

Wichita Area Office 100 N Broadway, Suite 470 Wichita, KS 67202 Phone: (316) 269-6644 Toll Free (Kansas Residents Only) 1-800-362-2896 Fax: (316) 269-6185

# **Industrial Safety** and Health

Kansas Department of Labor **Industrial Safety and Health** 417 SW Jackson St. Topeka, Kansas 66603-3327 (785) 296-4386 www.dol.ks.gov/ish

## **OSHA Assistance & Industrial** Safety and Health (ISH) Services



OSHA compliance assistance specialists can provide information to employers and workers about OSHA standards, short educational programs on specific hazards or OSHA rights and responsibilities, and information on additional compliance-assistance resources.



Visit www.osha.gov/complianceassistance/cas or call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) to contact your local OSHA office.



The Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL) can provide your company with a FREE safety and health consultation. The confidential process involves a walk-through safety evaluation or virtual assistance, a report and a followup visit.

For more information visit:



www.dol.ks.gov/ish/services/private-sector/safety-assistanceand-consultations

or call (785) 296-4386 to contact KDOL's ISH office.



# Health & Safety in the Workplace

#### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

While engineering and administrative controls are considered more effective in minimizing exposure to coronavirus, PPE may also be needed to prevent certain exposures. While correctly using PPE can help prevent some exposures, it should not take the place of other prevention strategies.

#### All types of PPE must be:

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- Consistently and properly worn when required.
- Regularly inspected, maintained, and replaced, as necessary.
- Properly removed, cleaned, and stored or disposed of, as applicable, to avoid contamination of self, others, or the environment.

Employers are obligated to provide their workers with PPE needed to keep them safe while performing their job tasks. The types of PPE required during a COVID-19 outbreak will be based on the risk of being infected with coronavirus while working and job tasks that may lead to exposure.

Workers, including those who work within six feet of patients known to be, or suspected of being, infected with coronavirus and those performing aerosolgenerating procedures, need to use respirators.

For more information on proper use of PPE visit:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html

For more information on optimizing your PPE supply visit: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/ppe-strategy/index.html

## Addressing Sick Employees

Prompt identification and isolation of potentially infectious individuals is a critical step in protecting workers, customers, visitors, and others at a worksite.

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- Employers should inform and encourage employees to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 if they suspect possible exposure.
- Employers should develop policies and procedures for employees to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- Ensure that sick leave policies are flexible and consistent with public health guidance and that employees are aware of these policies.

Do not require a healthcare provider's note for employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness to validate their illness or to return to work, as healthcare provider offices and medical facilities may be extremely busy and not able to provide such documentation in a timely way.

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# **Health & Safety in the Workplace**

## **Mandatory Social Distancing**

Employers must ensure all employees keep at least six feet away from coworkers and the public, when feasible. Other prevention measures are required such as use of barriers to block sneezes and coughs, and ventilation improvements when social distancing isn't feasible.

- Move workstations further apart or reduce the number of workstations in use at any given time
- Stagger work schedules so workers don't crowd when they arrive and leave work
- Limit the number of people entering the building
- Use dividers or floors markings to distinguish appropriate spacing for people waiting in lines or in front of service counters
- Stagger break and lunch schedules to minimize occupancy; or limit and monitor occupancy based on the size and layout of the room.
- Utilize virtual online meetings and text messaging instead of in-person meetings.
- Have workers take separate vehicles when the passenger space in vans and trucks doesn't allow for social distancing.
- Reduce in-person visits with clients and customers; rely on email, text, and online meetings.
- Contact clients to inquire about COVID-19 symptoms before making a house visit; this helps ensure the worker can make necessary provisions for PPE and other precautions.

## Cleaning, Handwashing & **Respiratory Etiquette**

- Promote frequent and thorough hand washing, including by providing workers, customers, and worksite visitors with a place to wash their hands. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Encourage respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes.
- Provide customers and the public with tissues and trash receptacles.
- Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
- Make sure shared work vehicles are regularly cleaned and disinfected.
- Employees should avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the work environment.

When choosing cleaning chemicals, employers should consult information on Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved disinfectant labels with claims against emerging viral pathogens. Products with EPAapproved emerging viral pathogens claims are expected to be effective against SARS-CoV-2 based on data for harder to kill viruses.



# Workplace Discrimination & Voicing Safety Concerns

Employers are prohibited from retaliating against workers for raising concerns about safety and health conditions. Additionally, OSHA's **Whistleblower Protection Program** enforces the provisions of more than 20 industry-specific federal laws protecting employees from retaliation for raising or reporting concerns about hazards or violations of various airline, commercial motor carrier, consumer product, environmental, financial reform, food safety, health insurance reform, motor vehicle safety, nuclear, pipeline, public transportation agency, railroad, maritime, securities, and tax laws.

## Filing a Safety & Health Complaint

You (or your representative) have the right to file a confidential safety and health complaint and request an OSHA inspection of your workplace if you believe there is a serious hazard or if you think your employer is not following OSHA standards. The complaint should be filed as soon as possible after noticing the hazard. A signed complaint is more likely to result in an onsite inspection.



A complaint may be filed online here:

www.osha.gov/pls/osha7/eComplaintForm.html

## Filing a Whistleblower Complaint

You have the right to file a whistleblower complaint with OSHA if you believe your employer retaliated against you for exercising your rights as an employee under the whistleblower protection laws enforced by OSHA.



A complaint may be filed online here:

www.osha.gov/whistleblower/WBComplaint.html

#### **Local OSHA Office**

100 N Broadway, Suite 470 Wichita, KS 67202 Phone: (316) 269-6644 Toll Free (Kansas Residents Only) 1-800-362-2896 Fax: (316) 269-6185 A safety & health or whistleblower complaint may also be faxed, mailed or emailed to your local OSHA office. Printable forms can be found here:

www.osha.gov/workers/file\_complaint.html

A safety & health or whistleblower complaint may also be phoned in to your local OSHA office or 800-321-6742(OSHA)

#### **Public Sector Employees**

If you are an employee within the public sector, including state workplace, and are concerned about safety and health conditions at your facility, please complete the following form

www.dol.ks.gov/docs/default-source/ish-documents/k-ish-603.pdf?sfvrsn=d087b71f 10

For more information on whistleblower protections please visit: www.whistleblowers.gov Or see their FAQ at: www.whistleblowers.gov/faq



# Unemployment & Job Refusal

As the state begins to re-open, the Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL) is committed to ensuring the health, safety and well-being of all workers, employers, and the public in light of COVID-19.

Claimants and employers alike have many questions about how unemployment insurance benefits will be impacted if an employee refuses to return to work. It is important for both to know the standards and process KDOL will be using to make those determinations.



Decisions about whether or not someone is disqualified for unemployment insurance benefits due to failing to return to work will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Both claimants and employers should complete and return all forms received from KDOL as quickly as possible. This ensures a timely review of the claim by KDOL and reduces erroneous decisions.

In making this determination, KDOL will consider whether a bona fide offer of employment was made and refused, whether that employment was suitable, and whether the claimant had good cause for refusing the offer.

In considering whether there was an offer of work, KDOL will review whether specific information was provided regarding the position. Details such as duties, starting pay, and hours, must be conveyed to the claimant; however, if the claimant prevents the employer from providing those details by refusing the job or referral before they could be conveyed, a disqualification can still be imposed.



If an individual is considered high-risk for COVID-19, or lives with someone who is considered high-risk for COVID-19 and refuses to return to work, the individual may not be disqualified for benefits.

The Center for Disease Control has put out guidance identifying persons at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. KDOL will use this guidance in conjunction with guidance that may be provided by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to identify categories of high-risk individuals. These categories are subject to change as guidance from these organizations evolves. KDOL will consider different factors such as whether the employer has made reasonable accommodations for suitable work, such as allowing telework. We will also examine if the work environment has necessary safety measures in place for COVID-19. Employers must also act in accordance with, but not limited to, Governor Kelly's Executive Order 20-29 and guidelines from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Center for Disease Control, and the Kansas Department of Labor. We will also consider the respective phases of the Governor's re-opening plan and executive order that direct telework when possible.



If an individual is not considered high-risk for COVID-19, or does not reside with someone considered high-risk for COVID-19 and refuses to return to work, the individual may be disqualified for benefits.

A claimant who refuses to apply for suitable work, refuses to return to work, or otherwise refuses an offer of suitable employment, without good cause, may be disqualified for unemployment insurance benefits. Claimants are required to report whether or not they refused work during the week claimed during the weekly claims process.\* Employers can report job refusals by completing a job refusal form available at www.dol.ks.gov/docs/default-source/employer-documents/k-ben-3118-(12-18).pdf and submitting via email to UICC.JobRefusals@ks.gov.

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\*Cases in which claimants intentionally misstate or omit facts are considered fraudulent and may result in prosecution. Claimants will be required to pay back benefits deemed to have been overpaid. Overpayments that are due to fraud will be subject to penalties and interest.\*



# >>> Unemployment & Job Refusal



#### KDOL must then consider whether the employment offered was suitable.

Factors considered include whether the claimant has the skills, training, experience and capabilities to perform the work offered. Consideration also includes the claimant's prospects of finding work, the number of jobs available in the claimant's chosen occupation, the number of people unemployed in that occupation, and the length of time the claimant has been unemployed. If the work offered is not the claimant's normal profession, then considerations will include whether training will be offered to the claimant, and whether the job meets federal/state/local standards in terms of wages, hours or other conditions of the work. In light of COVID-19, KDOL will also consider whether the employer is taking appropriate measures to safeguard employee health and safety by providing personal protective equipment, practicing social distancing, disinfecting and cleaning practices, and following all Federal, State, and local guidelines.



#### Finally, KDOL will consider whether the claimant had good cause to refuse suitable work.

"Good cause" is not defined in K.S.A. 44-706(c). However, consideration of "good cause" may include whether the claimant's reason for refusing the offer of suitable work was of such nature that would impel a reasonable, not supersensitive, individual exercising ordinary common sense to refuse the work. Consideration will also be given as to whether the claimant showed good faith, which includes the presence of a genuine desire to work, when refusing the work.

Claimants who accept part time work may still be eligible to receive benefits. Claimants who return to work and continue to file weekly claims are required to report their earnings as they are earned; not when they are paid.\*



## After all of these relevant factors are considered, a Notice of Determination will be mailed to both parties.

If either the claimant or the employer disagrees with the examiner's determination, that party may appeal at their own expense in increasing level of appellate review: The Kansas Department of Labor Office of Appeals, Employment Security Board of Review, State District Court and beyond.

\*Cases in which claimants intentionally misstate or omit facts are considered fraudulent and may result in prosecution. Claimants will be required to pay back benefits deemed to have been overpaid. Overpayments that are due to fraud will be subject to penalties and interest.\*

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# Frequently Asked Questions

I am an essential worker. Why is my workplace not required to implement the COVID-19 health and safety protocols required for businesses allowed to reopen?

Your health and safety is a top priority and as stated, all businesses employing Essential workers are also required to comply with the same CDC and OSHA guidance and should be implementing health and safety protocols for all workers.

Any worker who believes that their business is not following CDC or OSHA guidance is encouraged to attempt to resolve their concerns directly with their business. If the worker is not successful in that attempt, fears retaliation or has suffered retaliation by the business, the worker should contact their Kansas OSHA office at 1-800-362-2896.

#### What do I do if I think my business hasn't complied with CDC, OSHA, or KDOL guidelines?

A business may not take adverse action, such as terminating, laying off or other retaliatory action, against a worker for exercising their safety and health rights, including raising with the business safety and health concerns, refusing to work under conditions they reasonably believe are unsafe or unhealthy related to COVID-19, participating in union activities concerning work place safety and health issues, filing a safety and health complaint or participating in an OSHA investigation.

Any worker who believes that their workplace is not following their Plan or is not following CDC, OSHA, or KDOL guidelines is encouraged to attempt to resolve their concerns directly with the business. If the worker is not successful in that attempt, fears retaliation or has suffered retaliation by the business, the worker should contact Kansas OSHA office at 1-800-362-2896.

If my business is unable to provide a reasonable accommodation and my serious health condition prevents me from working, am I eligible for unemployment insurance benefits?

If your business is unable to provide a reasonable accommodation upon your request, you may be eligible for unemployment. If the work is not suitable for the person, then he or she does not have to accept the work. We will examine if the work environment has necessary safety measures in place for COVID-19.

Can my business take my temperature before I am allowed to work?

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commissioner (EEOC) has advised that, generally, measuring a worker's body temperature is a medical examination. Because CDC and state and local health authorities have acknowledged community spread of COVID-19 and issued attendant precautions, businesses may measure workers' body temperature. However, businesses should be aware some people with COVID-19 do not have a fever. You can view additional guidance from EEOC.

Can my business require me to be tested for COVID-19 or require other medical tests before I am allowed to work?

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has issued guidance stating that during a pandemic, ADA-covered businesses may ask workers if they are experiencing symptoms of the pandemic virus. For COVID-19, these include symptoms such as fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or sore throat. Businesses must maintain all information about worker illness as a confidential medical record in compliance with ADA. EEOC has also advised ADA does not interfere with the guidance outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that workers experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should leave the workplace. You can view additional guidance from EEOC.



# Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

PUA is a broad program that expands access to unemployment, in addition to what state and federal law already pay. KDOL began taking applications for PUA on May 12th. For more information or to apply online, please visit www.PUA.GetKansasBenefits.gov

#### Those who may qualify include:

- Self-employed
- Independent contractors
- Gig" workers such as Uber and Lyft drivers
- Employees of religious organizations whose employment has been impacted by COVID-19
- You have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19
- Those who lack sufficient work history to file a claim or have been disqualified for state benefits but who are impacted directly by COVID-19

#### Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) FAQs

? I have not worked in the last two years. Can I get PUA benefits?

Likely not. Like all unemployment programs there must be a connection to the labor market either by showing work history or showing concurrent attempts to join the labor market.

I have not been working, but I had an offer to start a job that was rescinded or delayed due to COVID-19, can I get PUA?

Potentially. Definite plans to join the labor force are enough of a connection. You must still be directly impacted by COVID-19.

I was offered the option to work from home, but I chose not to work. Am I eligible for PUA?

No. If you are able to work from home, you cannot be paid PUA.

I am not working due to COVID-19, but I am being paid leave from my employer. Am I eligible for PUA?

Likely not. If you are being paid by the employer as if you were working your usual work hours and rate of pay, then you are not eligible for PUA. If you are being paid leave but not being paid your usual wages, then you may be eligible for some PUA—it would depend on the amount you are being paid just like if you are earning money while on unemployment benefits.

I formerly worked on a small farm or for a church or religious organization. Am I eligible for PUA?

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Yes, provided your unemployment was caused directly by COVID-19, you may be eligible for PUA.

## Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) FAQs

#### What does it mean for my unemployment to be directly impacted by COVID-19?

This means that your unemployment must be caused directly be COVID-19 in one of the following ways:

- You have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are seeking diagnosis because you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19
- You live in a house where someone in that same household has been diagnosed with COVID-19
- You are providing care for a family member or household member who has been diagnosed with COVID-19
- You are the primary caregiver for someone who cannot attend school or some other facility because it has been closed because of COVID-19, AND the availability of that school or facility is needed in order for you to work
- You cannot report to work due to an imposed quarantine resulting directly from COVID-19 (cannot be self-imposed)
- You have been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19
- You were scheduled to begin employment but are unable to do so as a direct result of COVID-19 (the business closed, you were mandated quarantine, or have been diagnosed)
- You have become the head of the household because of the death of the usual head of household that was caused by COVID-19
- You have been forced to quit your job as a direct result of COVID-19
- Your work has closed because of COVID-19
- You are an independent contractor who does not have a traditional place of business, but you cannot provide or sell your services due to the direct impact of COVID-19

#### ? How much will I receive if I am eligible for PUA?

Like state unemployment, this depends on your work history during the base period. The base period for PUA is the most recent tax year (i.e. 2019). We will use the same calculation as we use for state unemployment to determine your benefit amount. If you lack sufficient work or earnings but otherwise meet all requirements, then you will be eligible for the minimum. The minimum you can receive is \$192. The maximum you could receive is \$488.

#### Ooes FPUC also apply to PUA payments?

Yes. In addition to your weekly amount, you are eligible for the additional \$600 payments for weeks between March 29, 2020, and July 25, 2020.

#### ? How long is PUA available?

PUA is available for eligible claimants from February 2, 2020, until December 26, 2020. It is only available for 39 weeks within that period of time. If you received state unemployment or extended benefits, then the number of weeks for PUA is reduced from 39 by the number of weeks you received state and extended benefits.

#### Oo I need any documentation for my application?

Yes. You will need to provide proof of your quarterly earnings during 2019.



# **Changes to Working Conditions**

#### Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

Federal law, administered by the US Department of Labor/Wage & Hour Division (WHD), states that overtime is due once an employee has worked over 40 hours within a work week. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), does not limit the number of hours per day or per week that employees age 16 years and older can be required to work. Kansas law states that overtime is due once an employee has worked over 46 hours in a work week. Kansas law only applies to those employers not covered under the FLSA (federal law).

- The Kansas Wage Payment Act (KWPA) requires Kansas employers to pay employees on regularly scheduled paydays upon separation of employment.
- WHD encourages employers to be accommodating and flexible with workers impacted by government-imposed quarantines. Employers may offer alternative work arrangements, such as teleworking, and additional paid time off to such employees.



Contact KDOL's Employment Standards Division at (785) 296-5000 x1068 or email: KDOL.EmploymentStandards@ks.gov

- Employers may require employees to perform work outside of the employee's job description. The FLSA does not limit the types of work employees age 18 and older may be required to perform. However, there are restrictions on what work employees under the age of 18 can do. This is true whether or not the work asked of the employee is listed in the employee's job description.
- Individuals who volunteer their services to a public agency (such as a state, parish, city or county government) in an emergency capacity are not considered employees due compensation under the FLSA if they:
  - Perform such services for civic, charitable or humanitarian reasons without promise, expectation, or receipt of compensation. The volunteer performing such service may, however, be paid expenses, reasonable benefits or a nominal fee to perform such services; and,
  - Offer their services freely and without coercion, direct or implied; and,
  - Are not otherwise employed by the same public agency to perform the same services as those for which they propose to volunteer.

If your business has a shortage of workers and is looking to "volunteers" to help out, be aware that the FLSA has stringent requirements with respect to the use of volunteers. In general, covered, nonexempt workers working for private, for-profit employers have to be paid at least the minimum wage and cannot volunteer their services. Check with the KDOL for the rules governing the circumstances where volunteering in the public and private, non-profit sectors may be allowed.

- Individuals who volunteer their services in an emergency relief capacity to private notfor-profit organizations for civic, religious or humanitarian objectives, without contemplation or receipt of compensation, are not considered employees due compensation under the FLSA. However, employees of such organizations may not volunteer to perform on an uncompensated basis the same services they are employed to perform.
- If telework is being provided as a reasonable accommodation for a qualified individual with a disability, or if required by a union or employment contract, then you must pay the same hourly rate or salary.



For more information on the Fair Labor Standards Act visit: www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/flsa/pandemic



## Time Off From Work

## **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)**

FFCRA requires certain employers to provide employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. Generally, the Act provides that employees of covered employers are eligible for\*:



Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at the employee's regular rate of pay where the employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a health care provider), and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis; or



Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at two-thirds the employee's regular rate of pay because the employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a health care provider), or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19, and/or the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Labor;



Up to an additional 10 weeks of paid expanded family and medical leave at twothirds the employee's regular rate of pay where an employee, who has been employed for at least 30 calendar days, is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

For more information on FFCRA and employer/employee paid leave rights please visit: www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic

## Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Under the federal FMLA, covered employers must provide employees job-protected, unpaid leave for specified family and medical reasons. which may include COVID-19 where complications arise. Employees on FMLA leave are entitled to the continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms as existed before they took FMLA leave.



Call the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division, at 866-487-9243 with questions or see U.S. DOL's COVID-19 FMLA guidance.

www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fmla/pandemic

## **Eligible Employees**



In general, employees of private sector employers with fewer than 500 employees, and certain public sector employers, are eligible for up to two weeks of fully or partially paid sick leave for COVID-19 related reasons. Employees who have been employed for at least 30 days prior to their leave request may be eligible for up to an additional 10 weeks of partially paid expanded family and medical leave if they are caring for a child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons. For more information visit:

www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/whd/posters/ffcra\_poster\_wh1422\_non-federal.pdf

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\*Under the Act, special rules apply for Health Care Providers and Emergency Responders. Employers of Health Care Providers or Emergency Responders may elect to exclude such employees from eligibility for the leave provided under the Act.